




**COMMONWEALTH**  
 **CORPORATION**



**REQUEST FOR  
PROPOSALS  
2025** YouthWorks

RELEASED DEC. 2024



# YouthWorks



## APPLICATION

Click here to begin your application and submit your proposal.



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## QUESTIONS

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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

As indicated in MA state budget line item 7002-0012, YouthWorks aims to reduce juvenile delinquency in youth and young adult homelessness in high-risk areas through employment of participants 14 years-old and not more than 25 years old. Specifically, this program aims to provide opportunities to youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, youth of color, youth of all abilities, national origins and religions and low-income youth, including single income households, and youth who are experiencing housing insecurity. YouthWorks is a state-funded youth employment program that helps teens and young adults gain the skills and experience needed to begin their career journey. YouthWorks provides Massachusetts teens and young adults with first jobs, leadership development, skills training, and career exploration. Participants of this program are 14- 25- years old who are at-risk of falling into chronic unemployment through lack of exposure to employment opportunities, experience, mentorship, and access to opportunity. The YouthWorks program looks to provide career exploration in areas of interest and in-demand jobs. To meet the need of this population, it requires continued efforts of partnerships and deeper engagement with existing programs such as Connecting Activities and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other relevant youth development programs across the state.

The YouthWorks program serves a wide range of participants in terms of ages, levels of career awareness, and long-term goals. To provide all participants with effective and relevant youth workforce development services, YouthWorks consists of four specific tiers that align with youth participant age:

- Tier 1 - Service and Project-Based Learning
  - 14-15-year-old participants
- Tier 2 - Early and Career Trajectory Experiences
  - 16-17-year-old participants
- Tier 3 - Career Pathway Training and Support
  - 18-21-year-old participants
- Emerging Workforce - Emerging into Career and Career Management
  - 22-25-year-old participants

The table below outlines the service strategy for the tiers, with a primary emphasis on age and a secondary emphasis on career stage. Programming should provide a bridge that will allow participants starting in Tier 1 to transition, as needed, through Tier 4 as they get older. However, if, based on in-take/interviewing, a case manager believes a participant would be best served in a tier that is better aligned with their current career stage rather than their age, programs are encouraged to enroll participants in the appropriate stage that aligns with their individual needs. Programs can operate, under contract, during the period of May 15, 2025- June 30, 2026. Given significant labor market challenges and investments in the workforce system, Commonwealth Corporation will work with regional partners to ensure we are collectively leveraging aligned programs, including Connecting Activities and WIOA.

To encourage the sustainability and capacity building of existing and new partnerships and innovative programming, for the 2025-202 programming cycle, applicants will engage in a grant allocation process.

## **Programmatic Elements and Collaborative Program Administration**

YouthWorks partners should continue to strive to provide participants with quality work and learning experiences that foster effective career development, build professional skills, and increase self-awareness. Additionally, programs should connect participants to mentors, peers, community and future opportunities through supportive structures and quality case management. As a statewide partner, Commonwealth Corporation is committed to supporting grantees and local programs in providing programming of the highest quality.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

As a leader in workforce development, the Commonwealth Corporation is committed to having the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion embedded into the programs and services we offer, as well as reflected in the people we impact and within our workplace culture. Our vision of a society – where upward economic mobility is possible for all – cannot be accomplished alone, but through the collective efforts and support of our staff, partners, board members and the communities in which we live and serve. To that end, programs must serve youth (age 14 to 25) who can self-attest to one or more of the following demographic and/or risk factors:

- Member of the LGBTQ+ community
- Person of Color
- From single-income household
- Experiencing housing insecurity
- Identifying as having a disability
- Other youth determined eligible by Commonwealth Corporation, including:
  - involved with the justice system (e.g. DYS-committed; on juvenile probation; gang-involved; CRS; or juvenile arrest);
  - actively in foster care or having aged out of foster care;
  - a school stop-out;
  - a child of a single parent;
  - having limited fluency in English; and
  - being a teen parent.

You will be required to report on these factors for all participants.

## **FUNDING GUIDELINES OVERVIEW:**

The YouthWorks program will continue to operate as a tiered wage program with a base of \$15/hr. across all tiers.

- Tier 1 Participants must be paid an hourly stipend/wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$16.25/hr.
- Tier 2 Participants must be paid an hourly stipend/wage between \$15.00/hr. and 17.50/hr.
- Tier 3 Participants must be paid an hourly wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$18.75/hr.
- Emerging Workforce: Participants must be paid an hourly wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$20.00/hr.

All regions are required to serve tiers 1-3, with optional programming for tier 4. If programs engage in tier 4 programming, the grantees should identify a target number of *Emerging Workforce* participants, which includes participants in tier 4. Applicants must identify a singular industry or occupational focus and demonstrate an ability to provide the relevant expertise, support, equipment, and related resources for programming.

**YouthWorks Age, Stage, and Path Model**

	Emerging Workforce			
<b>Tiers</b>	<b>Tier 1: Service and Project Based Learning</b>  Signal Success: Starting off Strong	<b>Tier 2: Early and Career Trajectory Experience</b>  Signal Success: Building a Professional Self	<b>Tier 3: Career Pathway Training and Support</b>  Signal Success: Crafting a Career Path	<b>Tier 4: Career Pathway Credentialing and Certifications</b>  Signal Success: Emerging into Career and Career Management
<b>Age</b>	14-15 years old	16-17 years-old	18-21 years old	22-25 years old
<b>Wage</b>	\$15.00 - \$16.25/hr.	\$15.00 - \$17.50/hr.	\$15.00 - \$18.75/hr.	\$15.00 - \$20.00/hr.
<b>Cycle 1 Period</b>	<u>June 1 - August 30</u> 60-150 program hours	<u>June 1 - August 30</u> 100-240 program hours	<u>June 1 - August 30</u> 120-340 program hours	Region-specific cohorts of three or more participants, expanding three (3) to four (4) months of programming, ideally, that aligns with the start of each Cycle
<b>Cycle 2 Period</b>	<u>September 2 - June 30</u> 40-300 program hours	<u>September 2 - June 30</u> 40-300 program hours	<u>September 2 - June 30</u> 40-420 program hours	

<p><b>Key components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signal Success Tier 1 Training Curriculum</li> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> <li>• Service-learning projects coordinated with local community partners and/or supportive small group introductory work placements</li> <li>• Sector aligned project-based learning intensives</li> <li>• Cohort-based case management</li> <li>• Match participants with learning opportunities that foster transferable skills and early career pipeline programming with specific employer partnerships</li> <li>• Optional: In-person job shadowing on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signal Success Tier 2 Training Curriculum</li> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> <li>• Introduction to career exploration through volunteerism and civic engagement</li> <li>• Introduction to targeted transferable skill development</li> <li>• Begin career pathway planning</li> <li>• Interview practice and individual personal branding focused on skills, interests, and assets</li> <li>• Consider Peer Leadership opportunities to support growth opportunities that involve increased independence, and/or stronger alignment to career interests</li> <li>• Defined career exploration activities that support increased awareness of in-demand industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signal Success Tier 3 Training Curriculum</li> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> <li>• Occupational training models with relevant industry certification, including exploring Interplay Learning careers in the Trades</li> <li>• Mentorship via professionals in field of interest</li> <li>• Work-based learning and skills training linked to pre-apprenticeship certification</li> <li>• Match participants with employment and learning opportunities that foster transferable skills</li> <li>• Engage participant in leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Interview practice and individual personal branding focused on skills,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signal Success Tier 4 Training Curriculum</li> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> <li>• Occupational training models with relevant industry certifications, including exploring Interplay Learning careers in the Trades</li> <li>• Structured, career specific, mentorship</li> <li>• Placement with business/organizations looking to hire</li> <li>• Identified full- or part-time employment at the completion of the program</li> <li>• Consider peer mentorship opportunities within YW programming to support growth opportunities</li> <li>• Interview practice and individual personal branding focused on</li> </ul>
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	<p>specific trades/careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> <li>• Optional: CPR/First-Aid training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> <li>• Optional: CPR/First-Aid training</li> </ul>	<p>interests, and assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support developing a Personal Resume</li> <li>• Job placements focused on a particular industry, supported by career awareness and exploration activities</li> <li>• Focus on marketable skills and increased opportunity</li> <li>• Skills to find and keep an unsubsidized job</li> <li>• Provide participants with skills, exposure, and experience to obtain entry-level positions in high-demand fields and make informed career</li> <li>• Collaborative and teamwork activities</li> <li>• Optional: CPR/First-Aid training</li> </ul> <p>Optional: design Micro Career Pathway comparable courses that align with Connecting Activities programming</p>	<p>skills, interests, and assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support developing a Professional Resume</li> <li>• Support returning participants with marketable skills and increased opportunity</li> <li>• CPR/First Aid training or an industry-recognized credential</li> <li>• Optional: design Micro Career Pathway or comparable courses that align with WIOA adult training</li> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage.</li> </ul>
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To support collaboration, the following chart outlines core programmatic elements and details the responsibilities of grantees alongside the support provided by Commonwealth Corporation.

Programmatic Element	What does CommCorp Provide?	What is the role of the grantee and local program providers?
<b>Required Elements for All Participants Across All Tiers</b>		
<p><b>Signal Success Work &amp; Career Readiness Training Curriculum</b></p>	<p>Instructor-led materials and online self-paced modules for Tiers 1 - 3 so that participants can develop work readiness and career skills and knowledge</p> <p>Train-the-trainer training for regional <i>Signal Success</i> instructors to ensure effective facilitation of curriculum</p> <p>Guidance regarding the integration of learning between the in-person and virtual <i>Signal Success</i> modalities</p> <p>Curriculum available in Spanish</p>	<p>Ensure successful work and career development for participants via case management</p> <p>Review participant progress and provide feedback on their self-paced work in addition to ensuring participants are completing required <i>Signal Success</i> hours</p> <p>Ensure program <i>Signal Success</i> facilitators attend <i>Signal Success</i> train-the-trainer or any refresher session(s) prior to facilitating training.</p> <p>Facilitate live <i>Signal Success</i> curriculum within local programming</p> <p>Ensure the completion of <i>Signal Success</i>/career readiness hours as outlined in the RFP</p>
<p><b>Career Exploration</b></p>	<p>Support partnership building between private sector employers and local programming</p> <p>Interplay Learning platform to provide virtual, career exploration and hands-on training experience in the trades</p>	<p>Plan, create, and facilitate opportunities and events for participants to engage with professionals in careers of interest, similar to Career Chats</p> <p>Engage participants in opportunities provided by CommCorp to increase opportunities of participants of career exploration</p> <p>Provide toolkits to regions for facilitation and organization of panels for Alumni engagement and career exploration</p>
<p><b>Data and Case Management</b></p>	<p>Guiding tools, training, and regional support</p> <p>Access to technology solutions to address gap in technology accessibility</p>	<p>Organize and conduct regular one-on-one and group check-ins to support success</p> <p>Through case management, address barriers and provide referrals as needed</p>

Programmatic Element (Relevant Tier)	What does CommCorp Provide?	What is the role of the grantee and local program providers?
All participants must take part in <b>at least one</b> of these, but they may also participate in more than one. Programs should make every attempt to align approach by participant need and programmatic tier.		
<b>Service- Based Learning</b> (Tier 1)	Support on-going effective service-learning projects  Common assessment tools to track outcomes	Building internal capacity or partnering with local Community Based Organizations or schools to structure and facilitate virtual, in-person, or hybrid service-learning projects
<b>Subsidized Work Placements</b> (Tiers 3 & 4, some Tier 2)	Common assessment tools to track outcomes  Guidance and regional support on employer engagement, how to structure virtual opportunities and tools for supporting alignment to safety protocols	Identifying, developing, and monitoring supportive placements that include mentoring - provided by an experienced individual in the field - and support for participants  In the case of shorter placements, aligning them to additional opportunities like Interplay learning and Micro Career Pathway courses, when offered  Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan
<b>Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning</b> (Tiers 1 & 2, some Tier 3)	Development of resources and tools to support age-and-stage-appropriate work and outcomes across the four tiers  Coordination of cross-program peer gatherings  Curriculum, toolkits, and guides to facilitate programming	Facilitation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) groups which should include regular, live whole-group and small- group Zoom sessions and in-person projects  Recruitment and coordination with employer partners and professionals to serve as project advisors and when appropriate project “clients”
<b>Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan</b> (Tier 2, some Tier 1 & 3 - participants receiving > 60 hours of subsidized work)	Integrated space in the YouthWorks database	Job description, list of skills, and feedback/reviews to participate  Employer engagement orientation and support services that help employers understand the goals of the program and the needs of the participants
<b>Peer Leaders</b> (Tiers 2, 3 & 4)	Provide curriculum to train, recruit, and hire peer-leaders for programs	Provide opportunities for returning and/or older participants to practice leadership and project management skills, while also serving as peer mentors to younger participants (at least one peer leader for every 12 projected participants ) Provide resources for additional professional development and trainings such as First Aid and CPR

**A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

The specifications in this planning package pertain to the Commonwealth’s PY2025 budget (Line-Item No. 7002-0012). Funds must be used in 2025-2026 to prepare for and support youth and young adult training and employment programs between June 2025 and June 2026. Project expenses related to instructional/training staff, training equipment/supplies, employer outreach, case management and other activities are authorized to begin on the start date listed on the contract, or in the event of delayed signing, as of the date a contract is signed.

The online application portal will open December 10, 2024. Grant proposals (in electronic form) are due by close of business (5:00 P.M.) on February 10, 2025. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated together.

Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to contact applicants for clarification or negotiation, to extend or revise any deadline, and to reject or accept any proposals in whole or part, if deemed to be in the best interest of the YouthWorks program. The Commonwealth Corporation may negotiate the terms of the contract before issuing the award.

**Programs should submit applications via the [PY25 YouthWorks Application -- Page One](#)**

**Programs should submit questions for response and posting via the [PY25-26 Youthworks RFP Question Form](#)**

Activity	Date
Request for Proposals Information Session	November 20, 2024
Request for Proposals Released	December 10, 2024
Application Portal Opens	December 10, 2024
Strongly Encouraged Deadline to Submit Written Questions	January 6, 2025
Responses to written questions posted to website	January 14, 2025
Application Responses Due	February 10, 2025
(Anticipated) Application Status Notification	March 6, 2025
(Anticipated) Contract Start	April 19, 2025
Worksites Entries into CC YouthWorks Hub	June 20, 2025
Data Entry Due Dates	August 1, 2025 January 12, 2025 May 15, 2025 July 15, 2025 (Final Report)
Contract End	June 30, 2026

Other important program related dates can be found in the YouthWorks Portal here: [Commonwealth Corporation - Calendar \(commcorp.org\)](https://www.commcorp.org/youthworks).

Questions related to the application process can be emailed to: [youthworks@commcorp.org](mailto:youthworks@commcorp.org)

### A1. Eligible Applicants for Funds

To preserve continuity and maximize opportunities for lasting program improvements, the lead applicant(s) should be the same lead applicants lead applicants from previous YouthWorks programming years. Lead applicants must ensure partners target services to the priority cities, but **any participant from the communities served by the workforce investment region who meets the eligibility guidelines may participate fully in the programming.** Please note, grantees **do not have to limit the share** of participants from non-priority cities.

Applications to design and manage local YouthWorks programs must be submitted on a cooperative basis among the prioritized city(ies) and the local MassHire Workforce Board where those cities are located.

### A2. Available Funding

Commonwealth Corporation anticipates **\$23,000,000** in total funding across the state. Funding awarded will be for the use of the entire fiscal year (Cycles 1 and 2), inclusive of planning, outreach, recruitment, enrollment, and delivery of program activities beginning April 19, 2025. Cycle 1 programming will take place June 1, 2025 – August 30, 2025, with Cycle 2 beginning September 2, 2025 – June 30, 2026. **Please note**, the June programming start date is in support of training for Peer Leaders and hiring of supporting program staff. Funding will support placements and programming that take place virtually, in-person or hybrid which will be decided by regions. This funding year will be based on allocated amounts per region, please see the regional breakdown below:

Region,	PY 25-26 Allocation	Target Youth to Serve
Berkshire	\$584,200	188
Boston	\$4,149,200	1,338
Bristol	\$1,550,200	500
Cape and Islands	\$239,200	77
Central Mass	\$2,079,200	671
Franklin-Hampshire	\$526,700	170
Greater Brockton	\$1,044,200	337
Greater Lowell	\$1,012,200	329
Greater New Bedford	\$1,044,200	337
Hampden County	\$2,953,200	953
Merrimack Valley	\$1,665,200	537

Metro North	\$2,286,200	737
Metro South/West	\$1,090,200	352
North Central	\$469,200	151
North Shore	\$1,320,200	426
South Shore	\$975,200	315
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,000,000</b>	<b>7,418,4189</b>

Target enrollment per tier is not prescribed to maximize flexibility for programs to serve participants who are interested and are a good fit for the program. Regions are encouraged to plan for and support a full age, stage, and path approach to programming for participants up to 25 years old. We understand the value of stage; if, based on in-take/interviewing, a case manager believes a participant would be best served in a tier that does not align with age, but stage, we encourage programming that aligns. Regions experiencing challenges in meeting their enrollment targets submitted with their application will be expected to report this during quarterly reporting and work with the Commonwealth Corporation regional support team closely to improve recruitment and enrollment and/or negotiate a reduced contract to free up resources for additional programming in other regions. Regions that find they have high rates of demand for enrollment in programs are encouraged to create and document a waitlist and share this information with Commonwealth Corporation in a timely manner.

### **A3. Designation of Lead Entity**

MassHire Workforce Boards must be the lead entity for each region. The applications must identify one grant fiscal agent. A YouthWorks program may be operated directly by a MassHire Workforce Board, a MassHire Career Center, or may involve the award of sub-grants to one or more cities, organizations or other entities that would be expected to (a) directly employ eligible youth, (b) serve as intermediaries and brokers to recruit employers and youth, or (c) provide a gap-filing service. Grantees are encouraged to issue sub-grants to a network of organizations that are capable of directly providing or facilitating meaningful employment and career-related learning participants. These include such entities as community-based organizations, public agencies, qualified faith-based organizations, One-Stop Career Centers, Workforce Development Boards, non-profit youth serving organizations, or other organizations whose mission and population served aligns with YouthWorks programming.

**Applicants must identify specific organizations that will serve as sub-grantees as part of the application and submit a list into the CC YouthWorks Hub by June 20, 2025, ahead of Cycle 1 programming.** If agencies change and/or a need to revise the list of identified entity becomes necessary, a discussion should be first held with your assigned Regional Support Manager, at which point you will be advised to submit revisions to the CC YouthWorks Hub as needed to keep it up to date.

It is expected that the targeted cities and the local workforce boards will work together to design the most effective program to meet the needs of local participants, including aligning placements with local labor market information.

#### **A4. Expanding Partnership and Employer Engagement**

As the Commonwealth Corporation and the field continue efforts to grow the YouthWorks program through the building and support of partnerships, networks, and relationships with businesses across the state, it is expected regions will continue their efforts in the expansion of partnerships as well. Participant support and outreach relies on the strength of our partners to recruit, provide case management, and create work experience opportunities in conjunction with their sub-grantees.

As we move into the 2025-2026 program year with the continued expansion of older participants, the expectation is that partners will engage employers whose mission aligns with the YouthWorks program and/or state level partners with regional presences in which Commonwealth Corporation may be able to provide support. Commonwealth Corporation encourages collaboration with all employers and encourages lead agencies to explore private sector investment for private sector placements beyond the 10% match.

Regions are encouraged to expand employer recruitment to align with high growth career pathways and industries outlined in Regional Blueprints and articulated as priorities by the Healey-Driscoll Administration (including the life sciences, health care and human services, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing). Additionally, building on the Recommendations of the Climate Chief and the Governor's Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience, regions are encouraged to engage employers representing employment opportunities in clean energy, climate, and resiliency. The application (Question 5) requires information on employer partnerships and a breakdown of sites by industry or sector. The Administration will report on Youthworks programming across industries with an interest in highlighting Youthworks employment placement in climate, clean energy, and resiliency.

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with the following: schools with Chapter 74 approved vocational-technical programs; schools participating in MA College and Career Pathway Initiatives community colleges; public agencies; employers; and community-based organizations focused on workforce development. Partnering business/organizations should align with regional labor market data and how the region plans to sustain or expand the programming in subsequent YouthWorks employment and training programs. Partnering organizations should, at the time of application, operate within the MassHire region of the applicant.

Programs should make connections to an academic interest, of their target populations (e.g., climate and clean energy; language arts; numeracy; STEM). The program model should include strategic pairing of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 so YouthWorks participants can experience a sustained and progressively sequenced set of work and learning experiences.

## A5. Application Process and Deadlines

The lead entity, the MassHire Workforce Board, must apply on behalf of the region for the region to receive program funds.

All applications must be received by the Commonwealth Corporation by February 10, 2025, via the [PY25 YouthWorks Application -- Page One](#). The online application portal will be available starting **December 10, 2024**.

- Applications should be no more than 20 pages and should provide all information as listed in the Program Narrative section - applications over page count are subject to be deemed ineligible
- Applications that do not adequately describe activities within the scope of work included in this document may not be eligible for funding or may require revision to be eligible for funding

## A6. Required Application Contents

- A. Application and Program Plan Summary. See pages (37) of the RFP.
- B. Program Budget and Narrative. (See attached.)
- C. Organization's W9 (for the contracting organization, updated within the past 12 months)
- D. Employee Handbook (if updated since last submission)
- E. Fiscal Policy and Procedures Guide (if updated since last submission)
- F. Organizational Chart (if updated since last submission)

## **B. PROGRAM GOALS AND APPROACH**

### **Youth Focused Programmatic Features of the YouthWorks Model**

- ✓ Rolling admission and enrollment in Tiers 1 - 3
- ✓ *Signal Success* career readiness and career exploration services
- ✓ Ability to pair participants with a wide range of work and learning experiences based on interests and needs
- ✓ Statewide project-based learning and career pathway course opportunities
- ✓ Opportunity to take on leadership roles including, but not limited to Peer Leaders
- ✓ Opportunity to engage with peers and professionals in fields of interest

## **B1. Program Objectives.**

As part of Governor's workforce priority to train unemployed and underemployed individuals across Massachusetts, the YouthWorks program aims to improve the employability of participants by offering them structured work and learning opportunities through subsidized employment and supporting activities such as *Signal Success* soft skills-building curriculum. The anticipated

outcome of YouthWorks is to provide young people with the skills, experience, and networks to be able to secure employment in the unsubsidized labor market in critical areas of the economy including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, and construction.

## **B2. Duration of Program Activities**

In the interest of participant retention and seamless transition from one cycle to the next, participants can engage in both cycles with the support of this combined RFP and additional database support around participant applications will be provided by CommCorp.

### **Cycle 1 Period (June 1, 2025 – August 31, 2025)**

Programs should be designed to provide each participant with a minimum of 40 program hours of program activity between June 1, 2025, and August 30, 2025.

### **Cycle 2 Period (September 2, 2025 – June 30, 2026)**

It is expected that participants be employed/in training for a minimum of fifteen 15 hours per week between September 2, 2025, and June 30, 2026. The employment must fulfill the following conditions:

- Participants who are 17 and under may be employed for no more than 15 hours per week for any employment that occurs while school is still in session
- Participants who are 18 and older may be employed for more than 15 hours per week for any employment

Recognizing not all programs operate at full capacity all year, we encourage programs to identify beginning and ending dates for cohort programming and provide those details within their application.

## **B3. Recruitment, Enrollment, and Case Management**

Programs are encouraged to define recruitment processes that include assessing potential participants' fit for the program in terms of interests, and skills. Additionally, programs should think through how each of these components will be accomplished differently for virtual, in-person, and hybrid programming. Sharing information and conducting on-boarding sessions online in an interactive manner helps participants know what to expect and provides opportunities to address technology barriers in advance when planning virtual opportunities. After a participant has been accepted and enrolls into the program, local program supports should ensure participants have signed the "Participation Agreement", acknowledging they understand what is required and expected of them as a participant of the YouthWorks program. During orientation, participants should be given a copy of the "Participant Guide" which can be found in the YouthWorks Help Center Portal; programs should identify a tracking system to indicate receipt of this document.

**Note:** If a participant declines signing off on the participant agreement, they should not be allowed to move forward with the program.

It is essential to avoid imposing additional barriers or exacerbating existing barriers, **so all programs should plan to provide participants who need a device to access programming with a Chromebook or entry-level laptop for virtual and/or hybrid programming. Equipment purchases in previous years should be leveraged first** prior to any new purchases. In many cases this may be a greater need amongst out-of-school participants. Finally, all programs need to identify additional modes of case management beyond email and voicemails. Layering in text-based communication, dedicated live small group case management, and team-based communication through tools like Google Chat and Microsoft Teams increases engagement and persistence among participants because it provides multiple avenues to access support.

***Case Management:*** Each contracted and sub-contracted site will be required to provide advocacy and support to program participants by conducting needs assessments, developing customized success plans, and monitoring and evaluating participant progress on a regular basis. In addition, each site will maintain an active list of resources and referrals to other wrap-around support services and networks that participants can access, when needed. This framework is designed to assist participants with successful completion of the YouthWorks program and will be referred to as Case Management.

Case Management should occur at the start of a program cycle and evaluated mid-program and at the end of programming. If program capacity allows, additional case management support is encouraged throughout a participant's engagement with the program. Programs are encouraged to keep a detailed log of communication between participant and program support especially indicating multiple efforts to communicate with a participant around subjects such as timesheet completion, completed program hours, additional program opportunities, etc.

Challenges with participants should be shared with the YouthWorks team to identify possible solutions.

#### **B4. Utilization of Peer Leaders**

One of the most promising practices across the YouthWorks partner network is the strategic use of peer leaders. Peer leadership roles provide opportunities for returning and/or older participants to practice leadership and project management skills, while also serving as peer mentors to younger participants. All programs are strongly encouraged to recruit and support at least one peer leader for every 12 projected participants. The peer leaders can support some staff implementation tasks while also benefiting from the learning components of the program. The Commonwealth Corporation will provide materials for regions to support recruiting, hiring, and training of peer leaders. The June start date of programming has been incorporated into programming for regions to provide support and guidance to Peer Leaders before the official kick-off of Cycle 1 in July.

**B5. Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning**

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional methodology encouraging participants to learn by applying the knowledge and skills acquired via programming to have an engaging learning experience through group project-based activities. PBL presents opportunities for deeper learning in-context and for the development of important skills tied to college and career readiness. The PBL activities are a required component of programming for all Youthworks contracted and sub-contracted sites. Sites should facilitate this training with guidance and support from Commonwealth Corporation in the form of training, toolkits, and facilitation guides.

Programs are encouraged to build off the PBL curriculum created by Commonwealth Corporation and shared with program providers. PBL should integrate local resources and partners into the programming. To maintain program quality and consistency, when facilitating PBL, sites are urged to do so in keeping with the four projects (below) and the corresponding content materials. Sites may use other sources of content material; however, content must be pre-approved by your designated regional support manager. PBL should be conducted at a minimum once per program year. If you are offering multiple cohorts per grant year, then your program may want to incorporate, at least, two PBL activities to ensure more participation for youth. If possible, PBL should be conducted in-person and during school break(s) to allow for more participant engagement; Commonwealth Corporation will provide facilitation guides and curriculum.

Project Topic	Aligned Sectors
1. Producing a Pro Social Media Plan to Help Where It’s Needed Most	Business, Management, & Administration Communications & Information Systems
2. Cultivating and Sharing Self-care and Wellness Practices That Work	Health Science Technology Human Services
3. Making an Impact through Entrepreneurship, Advocacy and Corporate Responsibility	Business, Management, & Administration Human Services
4. Developing Classroom Art, Literature, or Curriculum to Support Positive Outcomes for Younger Learners	Communications & Information Systems Human Services

**B6. YouthWorks Learning Management System (LMS)**

The YouthWorks LMS is the system that will serve as the central place for accessing the Signal Success training curriculum, work readiness learning topics, and Micro Career Pathways in Trades courses. Staff can assign, track and engage with participants and all YW work readiness programming.

## **B7. Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan**

The Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan ([WBLP](#)) is structured to provide depth to work-based learning experiences while creating an opportunity for participants and program coordinators to engage in discussion(s) related to short-term and long-term goals aligning with skill assessment and career exploration. School-aged participants engaging in 60 or more subsidized work hours should create a plan that would benefit the participant in the completion of resumes, job applications, and college applications.

## **B8. Quality Hybrid and Virtual Service-Learning Projects**

Service-learning projects can offer younger participants foundational work skills through a substantive and well-structured work-based learning experience. Traditionally in-person, many of these projects can be translated to virtual or hybrid projects alongside learning. Increased mentoring and support are essential components when structuring a service-learning project for implementation especially virtual and/ or hybrid projects.

### **Best Practices for Service-Based Learning:**

- Develop clear and measurable learning outcomes for the project and relevant assessments to measure and record outcomes;
- Integrate key members of the local community into the process and project so that participants have a clear sense of purpose, audience, and impact;
- Adding accountability and a professional aspect to the learning by having students develop descriptions and then revisit these documents along with a work-based learning evaluation tool on a regular basis;
- Include ongoing and simple practices to gauge student perspectives by creating intentional spaces for participants to reflect and discuss their experience. Ensuring these activities occur in a range of modalities and settings will garner the most traction. For example, programs are likely to get different information in a whole group sharing session about highlights and challenges of the week than in a short, written feedback survey;
- Intentionally include ways for participants to change or expand their experience;
- Build in opportunities to regularly respond to case management needs. Whether it is part of a weekly staff meeting or the end of the day wrap-up text or email exchange, staff need time to respond to what they are observing. Especially in cases where participants are struggling or starting to disengage, early intervention is essential.

## **B9. Online, Hybrid, and In-Person Placements**

Work-based learning is the foundation of the Early and Career Trajectory Experiences (Tier 2) and a key component across the other program tiers. These placements are designed to match participants with subsidized employment opportunities that foster transferable skills. Whether the placement is a participant's first job or an opportunity to build on previous work experience, YouthWorks subsidized placements are work-based learning opportunities with the rigor and

authenticity of paid employment realities and responsibilities. While traditionally, these placements are conducted entirely in-person, many can translate into strong online and hybrid options.

### **Best Practices for Work-Based Learning Experiences:**

- Active employer engagement and workforce development focused on identifying and developing quality work placements;
- Clear and inclusive recruitment processes include assessing potential participants' interests and skills, and then utilizing this intake information to complete thoughtful job placement matches;
- Employer engagement orientation and support services that help employers understand the goals of the program and the needs of the participants;
- Agreement with employers about what types of tools and strategies will be used to promote accountability and support for remote or hybrid placements;
- Coordination with local Connecting Activities, WIOA, and Innovation Pathway programs to support an integrated approach to comprehensive career development for youth and young adults.

### **B10. Commitment to Participant Wage, Safe and Appropriate Working Environments**

- All subsidized placements in the YouthWorks program must include an hourly wage no less than the Massachusetts minimum wage of \$15.00/hr. All hourly wages must align with the tiered wage ranges provided.
- Prior to the start of participants engaging at a worksite, site supervisors must provide a comprehensive orientation including but not limited to the use of safety equipment and any tools/equipment which will be used by participants.
- Programs must pay an hourly wage or provide a comparable stipend for participation in all programming components. Programs should make every effort to maximize the financial benefits offered to participants through wages, stipends, and appropriate program incentives.
- Whether participants are visiting a worksite for a few hours or are placed there for the whole program, all work sites must be safe and appropriate spaces for all program participants. Work sites that demonstrate bias against specific populations should not be considered for program participation. All programs must have clear and participant-friendly support policies to prevent harassment in the workplace and address any issues that may arise.
- Worksites should post Child Labor Laws, when appropriate, and ensure participants are aware of workers' rights.
- Worksites sponsored by faith-based organizations may not engage participants in activities that are religious in nature. For example, it is not appropriate for YouthWorks participants to be asked to teach religious studies.

**Note:** All participants taking part in traditional in-person placements or employer-structured work from home placements **must have a valid work permit.** However, participants engaging in virtual

career development programming or occupational training courses only do not need work permits because this programming constitutes a learning experience rather than a job.

**B11. Effective and Systematic Career Readiness**

To promote employability skill development necessary to succeed in Massachusetts’ evolving economy, all participants will take part in a work and career readiness component and a related career-readiness assessment.

**Required curriculum component:** To help facilitate a consistent and progressive YouthWorks experience, Commonwealth Corporation will provide access to all instructor-led curriculum training materials for the four Tiers of *Signal Success* instruction:

- *Signal Success: Starting off Strong*
- *Signal Success: Build a Professional Self*
- *Signal Success: Crafting a Career Path*
- *Signal Success: Emerging into Career and Career Management*

The *Signal Success* training curriculum has been developed in alignment with evidence-based benchmarks in youth career development and research on employer expectations and preferences in hiring teens and young adults. Skill development will be focused on areas identified by O\*Net data as key skill requirements of entry-level occupations—jobs in which teens have been typically employed.

**Note:** All programs are required to use and have participants complete all Tier related modules of the *Signal Success* work readiness training curriculum created by the YouthWorks team.

The *Signal Success* training curriculum is also available in self-paced modules and can be accessed through the YouthWorks Learning Management System (LMS).

**B12. Measuring and Documenting YouthWorks Outcomes**

To document the accomplishments of YouthWorks and build an even stronger program, it is important for all regions to continue to augment their data collection and focus on reporting employment, education/training, and skill gain outcomes. Commonwealth Corporation will conduct regular reviews of data and engage with regional leads to ensure programs are meeting goals and expectations. The table below indicates the required data points and data collection tools and outlines which tools and outcomes are required of various programmatic components and approaches.

**Table: Data Points/Tools**

<b>Required Across all Tiers and Approached</b>
Participant Social Security Numbers (Commonwealth Corporation conducts wage record match)
Participant-level demographic information, wage/stipend, and hours of core program services
End of program survey (paper and online versions available)

Participant Case Study questionnaire (to be completed with a small strategic sub-set)	
Participant end of program plans (return to programming, enter workforce, hired by worksite, enter education)	
<i>Signal Success</i> Competency-Based Portfolio	
Worksite of participant (when applicable)	
Program Connection Analysis Protocol (tracks progression to WIOA and ConnectingActivities) <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Additional Requirement by Program Element</b>	
Service-Learning Project	Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan
Work Placement	Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan
Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning Intensives	Project Performance Assessment, deliverable, and self-reflection
Micro-Career Pathway Courses	Course completion status and LinkedIn Skill Assessment results, when applicable

By collecting and reporting a more comprehensive set of data, the YouthWorks program will be able to report on a wider range of positive outcomes. Some examples are listed below:

- Participants have increased labor market participation in the two years following their YouthWorks program experience
- Participants complete applicable core program components (*Signal Success* work readiness training, work placement, work-based learning experience, occupational training, etc.)
- Participants improvement of employability or soft skills
- Participants demonstrate knowledge of careers, and the education, training and skills required to progress through a chosen career path
- Participants maintain high levels of workplace engagement
- Participants trajectory after the completion of the program

**B13. Regional Support Component and Collaboration:**

Regional support is based on YouthWorks performance standards which have been established to support shared understandings of promising practices in subsidized youth training and employment programs. A regional support person will be an assigned staff member from Commonwealth Corporation. There will be a range of group-based regional support offerings that guide practice and develop local leadership and innovation. Consistent participation in statewide,

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<sup>1</sup> Programs are asked to share additional services, like WIOA and Connecting Activities, they connect participants to as a wraparound service. You will also be asked to indicate, to the best of your knowledge, whether a participant engaged in those opportunities.

regional, and local support gatherings is a requirement of the YouthWorks<sup>2</sup> grant. The following list provides details about the regional support services.

- 1) Monthly meetings with regional leads and YouthWorks leadership team
- 2) Statewide regional convening in October and March of each program year
- 3) Three site visits to take place during the programming year with the regional lead available and in attendance of each worksite visit within the region; Three site visits to take place during the programming year with the regional lead available and in attendance of each worksite visit within the region
- 4) Complete reporting including but not limited to matching of participants to worksites and ensuring there is an application on file for each participant
- 5) Data clean up including the removal of staff members no longer involved in the program and participants who complete applications but are not matched to a worksite
- 6) Individualized regional support via meetings and calls will support grantees in effective program design, implementation, and assessment
- 7) Identify appropriate staff to attend *Signal Success* fundamentals training

#### **B.14 Program and Resource Connections**

**Connecting Activities (CA):** YouthWorks is committed to making intentional connections with the statewide Connecting Activities (CA) program. CA funds pay for staff to recruit employers; prepare and place students in work-based learning opportunities such as YouthWorks; and structure those experiences using the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan. Suggestions for aligning YouthWorks and Connecting Activities include the following:

- Program managers work with CA staff in local high schools to provide outreach information about YouthWorks programming;
- Find out what students in local YW/CA high schools are at risk of stopping out, becoming homeless, or in DYS or DCF custody. Ensure that that school student-support staff have YW enrollment materials;
- Where feasible, support the transition of YW participants into CA school programming so that schools can be deliberate about capturing program experiences in college and career planning.

**Other Workforce and Relevant Youth Development Programs:** In addition to making connections to the CA program, grantees should consider recruiting participants for participation in YouthWorks who are connected through other state-funded programs. In support of building these networks, Commonwealth Corporation will support making these connections on the state level. The Commonwealth anticipates that applicant communities, in developing a local YouthWorks design, will consider connections with the following programs listed in the Table below.

**Table: List of Additional Program Resources**

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<sup>2</sup> The YouthWorks Training & Events Calendar is always updated with new information. Please check the YouthWorks website frequently to stay abreast of what's happening throughout the year

Program	Description and Applicable Links
<b>WIOA Title I Youth services</b>	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth program provides a wide variety of services, including subsidized jobs, for eligible low-income teens and young adults. YouthWorks youth are <i>not</i> required to be enrolled in WIOA. However, YouthWorks grantees <i>may</i> find significant value in supplementing the YouthWorks program with additional ‘wrap-around’ services funded by WIOA.
<b>WIOA Title I Adult services</b>	WIOA adult programs at the MassHire Career Centers may provide excellent supplemental services to youth employed under a YouthWorks grant. Local grantees may encourage youth who are at least 18 years of age to be enrolled as a MassHire Career Center member and provided with services to complement a YouthWorks program experience.  <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshire-career-centers">MassHire Career Centers   Mass.gov</a>
<b>Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)</b>	SSYI is a program administered by the Executive Office and Health and Human Services and is operated in 14 cities. The program model offers intensive outreach, case management, trauma supports and behavioral health services, education, employability, and employment services to 17–24-year-old young adults with proven risk. Local grantees may co-enroll youth who have been engaged in SSYI services, have a reduced risk level, and are ready for a subsidized placement or career pathway program experience.  <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/office-of-children-youth-and-family-programs">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/office-of-children-youth-and-family-programs</a>
<b>DTA/ TAFDC Teen Parenting Program (TPP)</b>	A statewide network of Teen Parenting Program (TPPs) services is funded by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) are procured and administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The goal of the TPP is to provide teen parents and their children with a safe place to reside where they can gain the skills and knowledge necessary to become competent parents and lead productive, independent lives. YouthWorks partners should consider partnering with TPP’s to extend services and establish referral relationships. Additionally, TPP’s may be suitable places to complete the cohort-based work readiness workshops for these participants.  <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/choose-a-tafdc-pathways-to-work-program">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/choose-a-tafdc-pathways-to-work-program</a> .

## **C. SPECIFICATIONS**

### **C1. Eligibility of Participants**

Participation in a YouthWorks program is limited to residents of the workforce regions who meet four eligibility requirements: age, income, risk factors, and geographic residence.

#### **C1.1. Age Requirements**

A participant is eligible to participate in the YouthWorks program if they are between the ages of 14 and 25, at least, sometime during the period of programming. A participant must be, at least, 14 at the

start of programming and not older than 25. The Commonwealth urges program managers to make special efforts to recruit and serve *Emerging Workforce* participants (Tiers 3 & 4) who are disconnected from work and education. Participants are not required to be enrolled in a secondary school to be eligible for the YouthWorks program.

### **C1.2. Income Requirements**

In the 2025-2026 program year, a participant must have a family income that does not exceed the annual equivalent of 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines. The 2025 federal poverty guidelines are included in the Appendices which was the most updated information at the time of this document's release. Because free lunch has been implemented across the state, local program administrators should be prepared to request proof of status with self-attestation serving as a source.

**Note:** The MA law passed in August 2023 does not impact low-income status for program participants. The YouthWorks program definition of free/reduced lunch eligibility meeting the low-income definition is specific to eligibility under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (i.e., the federal eligibility for free/reduced lunch). States or localities that have whole school free lunch does not mean all such youth are considered low income. These youth still need to meet Russell School Lunch Act eligibility to be considered low income using the free/reduced lunch criteria.

**Note:** For the purposes of YouthWorks programming, "income" is defined as gross income. "Family" is defined as two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence, and are included in one or more of the following categories:

- A married couple and dependent children,
- A parent or guardian and dependent children, or
- A married couple.

**Note for grantees relying primarily on youth self-attestation:** In this case, grantees should follow procedures to check whether such statements of income are accurate. The purpose of this check is to confirm the accuracy of the eligibility process, not necessarily to disqualify any individual who is included in the sampling.

**Note:** Income documentation is not required for youth who are documented as housing insecure, in foster care, or for youth with disabilities or special needs.

### **C1.3. Risk Factors**

Additionally, a participant is eligible to participate in the YouthWorks program if they meet at least one of the following demographic and/or risk factors:

- Member of the LGBTQ+ community
- Person of Color
- From single income household
- Experiencing housing insecurity
- Identifying as having a disability

- Other youth determined eligible by Commonwealth Corporation, including: involved with the justice system (e.g. DYS-committed; on juvenile probation; gang-involved; CRS; or juvenile arrest); actively in foster care or having aged out of foster care; a school stop-out; a child of a single parent; having limited fluency in English; and being a teen parent.

#### **C1.4. Place of Residence**

Lead entities must target services to the priority cities, but **any youth from the communities served by the workforce investment region who meet eligibility guidelines may participate fully in the programming.** There is no official limit to the amount of grant funds dedicated to serving eligible youth who reside outside of one of the priority cities.

#### **C1.5. Participation and Completion Requirements**

All participants should be paid for work and training, including orientation hours, with grant funds.

##### **Participants enrolled in Cycle 1 Period (June 2025 – August 30, 2025)**

For a participant **to be counted** they must have received and engaged in at least 10 program hours. Participants may take part in programming for as little as four (4) weeks and as many as nine (9) weeks.

Programs should support participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school youth, including summer school.

For participants **to be considered** having “**completed**” the program, they must complete at least 60 programmatic hours; and completion of post-participation survey. Hours can be broken down as follows:

- Career readiness hours are based on participant engagement; however, in addition to *Signal Success* participants, may engage in other career readiness activities:
  - Participants who engage in program activities in Cycle 1 only are expected to complete 15 total hours of career readiness training. Of those 15 hours, at least 10 must be spent completing *Signal Success training*. Of those 15 hours, at least 10 must be spent completing *Signal Success training*. The remaining five (5) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participants’ tier.
- All participants must take part in at least one of the below:
  - Service Based Learning,
  - Work Placement, or
  - Project Based Learning

##### **Participants enrolled in Cycle 2 Period (September 2, 2025 – June 30, 2026)**

For a participant **to be counted** they must have received and engaged in at least 10 program hours. Participants can take part in programming for as little as nine (9) weeks.

Programs should support participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school participants. For example, a Tier 1 or 2 participant might benefit from a 10-week program with an average of five (5) hours a week while an older out-of-school participant in Tiers 3 or 4 may participate in all of Cycle 2 for an average of 15 hours a week or more.

For participants **to be considered** having **“completed”** the program, they must complete at least 40 program hours; and completion of post-participation survey. Hours can be broken down as follows:

- Participants who engage only in activities in Cycle 2 September through June period are expected to complete 25 total hours of career readiness training. Of those 25 hours, at least 10 must be spent completing *Signal Success training*. The remaining five (15) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participants’ tier.
- All participants must take part in at least one of the below:
  - Service Based Learning,
  - Work Placement, or
  - Project Based Learning

### **Participants enrolled between June 2025 (Peer Leaders) – June 30, 2026<sup>3</sup>**

For a participant to be counted they must have engaged in at least 10 program hours. Participants may take part in programming for as little as 10 weeks. Programs need to be mindful to support participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school youth

If a participant engages in program activities throughout the entire program year, they are expected to engage in a combined total of at least 30 hours of career readiness programming over the course of the year. Of those 30 hours, at least 25 must be *Signal Success*. The remaining five (5) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participant’s tier.

**Note:** All participants are required to sign off on the “Participation Agreement” in the database and the “YouthWorks Participant Handbook”, which should be provided to participants in hard copy or virtually. Both documents can be found in the YouthWorks Portal.

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<sup>3</sup> Participants who engage in both cycles can be counted in a region’s target as two participants.

**C2. Allowable Expenditures.**

Allowable Expense	Placement in Budget	
	Admin	Participant Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clothing/uniforms for vocational programming/employment</li> <li>• Trainings</li> <li>• Transportation for youth participants, including bus passes, train passes, and bus or van rentals</li> <li>• Vocational or supplemental career readiness materials, including certification materials and testing fees</li> <li>• Driver's Education and License fees</li> <li>• Food for youth participants</li> <li>• Gift cards or other financial incentives (such as bonuses) for youth are permissible to a <u>maximum of \$350 per youth</u> for the duration of the grant period if they are tied to program milestones and do not occur in any single increment greater than \$100.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For their participation in Commonwealth Corporation facilitated events, participants may receive additional incentives that will not count towards their \$350</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Experiences (such as tickets to local events) not to exceed the \$350 per youth limit</li> <li>• In some cases, GED or HiSET testing fees and driver's licenses/state identification may</li> </ul>	<p>NOT ALLOWABLE</p>	<p>Support Services</p>

<p>be expended with prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation</p>		
<p>Electronic devices such as laptops, webcams, and Chromebooks and internet access support services</p>	<p>Equipment Purchases - for general office usage</p>	<p>Equipment Purchases - for Program specific equipment</p>
<p>Certificates and credentialing opportunities for participants</p>	<p>NOT ALLOWABLE</p>	<p>Youth Participant Tuition and Fees</p>
<p>Computer software</p>	<p>Office Supplies</p>	<p>Office Supplies - with written consent from the CommCorp Youthworks staff</p>
<p>Equipment rental</p>	<p>Equipment Rental and Leasing</p>	<p>NOT ALLOWABLE</p>

Cell phone reimbursement for the program staff that are serving YouthWorks participants	Telephone and Communications	NOT ALLOWABLE
Youth and employer outreach materials	Publications/Printing/Copying - if hard copy of materials  Marketing and Advertising (if soft copy of materials)	NOT ALLOWABLE
Mileage for program staff (for the YouthWorks grant) in relation to services rendered under the YouthWorks grant. Reimbursement will be provided for mileage only (at the current reimbursement rate of the grantee's fiscal agent)	Mileage	NOT ALLOWABLE
Staff expenses related to YouthWorks provided trainings, gatherings, and convenings	As appropriate one of the following: Mileage, Meal Reimbursement, Parking/Tolls/Taxi, Meetings and Events	NOT ALLOWABLE
In some cases, GED or HiSET testing fees and driver's licenses/state identification may be expended with prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation	TBD on a case-by-case basis	NOT ALLOWABLE
Salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff	Program Staff Salaries - calculated on Budget Detail Tab	NOT ALLOWABLE
Other costs directly related to the program	At your discretion or seek guidance from the CommCorp Youthworks Staff	At your discretion or seek guidance from the CommCorp Youthworks Staff

**Focus on Participant Wage:** Across the full budget of the regional grant, at least 60% of overall funding must be spent on youth wages, stipends, and support services. Please see the administrative guide for a better understanding of how to break down expenses by category. Participant salaries have a fixed 14% fringe. Programs can request to lower the youth fringe rate below 14% if deemed necessary.

- **Note:** Budgets submitted should include stipends/wages within the approved wage range (See Page 7) Programs expecting to provide stipends/wages higher than the approved wage

through match should incorporate that information in their match report, not the application budget narrative.

A maximum of 40% of the total funds may be spent on the following:

- Salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff
- Other Admin specific costs as outlined in the budget template and in the chart above.
- **Note:** No funds provided under this program may be used to support the salaries of existing permanent staff at any agency or facility at which youth are employed other than for that portion of their time which these staff spend supervising youth who are assigned directly to them; all such time allocations must be fully documented and are subject to approval by Commonwealth Corporation.

#### **Appropriate balance between workforce boards and their sub-grantees:**

Commonwealth Corporation expects all leading entities to consider how best to distribute administrative funding resources in an equitable manner. All programs that provide core services such as recruitment, case management and program implementation must have a vendor/partner worksheet in the program budget. Instances where vendors are not resourced appropriately will lead to requests for application and budget revisions and delay contracting.

#### **Indirect Rates:**

Indirect costs can equate to no more than 10% of the overall budget.

#### **Additional Guidelines:**

YouthWorks grantees' approved line-item grant budget will reflect the guidelines listed below. All line items must be described in the budget narrative worksheets in the budget template. Failure to obtain prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation for expenses outside and/or more than these guidelines may result in non-payment from Commonwealth Corporation.

***Non-allowable*** expenses include:

- Staff bonuses, incentives and/or gifts;
- Equipment (defined as any item of tangible personal property having a per-unit cost greater than \$5,000 and a useful economic life of more than three years). Property purchased with grant funds and used for grant purposes that does not meet the definition of 'equipment' would fall into the budget category of supplies and materials;
- Indirect costs that exceed 10% of the total budget;
- Mileage reimbursement not related to the YouthWorks grant;
- Any expenses more than the contracted grant amount or outside the contracted grant period; and
- Any expenses outside of the approved budget.

### **C3. Financial Match Expectations**

Based on the awarded contract amount, grantees are assigned regional private sector match of 10%. To be considered, ***match must come from private sector commitments*** – additional wages for participants – and not from other public funds that may be used to support the program.

Match can be documented as paid placements. Additional details on the match requirements can be found below.

#### **Financial Match Expectations and documentation**

Grantees are **required** to provide a cash match as outlined by YouthWorks appropriation which specifies that funds provided by the General Court shall be matched by private organizations. The Commonwealth requires each grantee to generate a private sector match equal to 10% of the approved budget for the YouthWorks program. The match can be achieved through grants or in-kind donations made by private-sector organizations to the workforce region or through private-sector wages paid to youth who are eligible for YouthWorks. Private-sector employers include private-sector enterprises and private nonprofit organizations such as private hospitals, colleges, universities, and others.

- **Note:** Budgets submitted should include stipends/wages within the approved wage range (See Page 6). Programs expecting to provide stipends/wages higher than the approved wage through match, should incorporate that information in their match report not application budget narrative.
- **Note:** *Failure to provide sufficient local, private sector match may be considered by the Commonwealth as a factor in establishing award levels for next year's YouthWorks program.*

#### **C4. Period of Performance.**

The contracts for programs that submit complete applications in a timely manner will be issued with a period of performance of May 15, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Expenditures charged to the grant **must** be for program activity and services rendered during this period. All such contracted funds must be expended by June 30, 2026. Funds unexpended after that date will revert to the Commonwealth.

### **D. GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Commonwealth Corporation relies on accurate and up-to-date reporting of program enrollment, participation, and outcome data to:

- Ensure that grantees are meeting contractual obligations and proper storing of documentation;
- Identify regional support needs and provide grantees with timely and effective support;
- Verify that participants are engaged in appropriate and relevant program activities; and

- Provide stakeholders with information about the impact of public investment in YouthWorks programs.

Reporting consists of participant-level data, narrative reports, and invoices.

### **D1. Publicity**

The Commonwealth receives a great number of requests for publicity, particularly about youth programs. To respond to these requests and to ensure that we have the most current information, program managers are asked to submit copies of any publicity regarding youth programs - newspaper stories, newsletter articles, etc. - to Commonwealth Corporation.

### **D2. Identification of Key Local Program Contact**

A local application *must* identify a specific individual who will be responsible for managing grant activities, communicating with sub-grantees, ensuring sub-grantee performance, creating a process/system for centralized reporting, overall program guidance, and provide contact information (telephone number and e-mail address) where the lead can be contacted. This individual or office will also serve as the point of reference for any referrals made through the Commonwealth's YouthWorks website.

### **D3. Youth Participant Program Reporting**

Grantees are required to report individual YouthWorks participant record data, including social security numbers, that will enable the state to develop program profiles, statistical reports on the characteristics of participating youth and employers, and calculate data on program wage levels as part of the process of reporting program outcomes to the Massachusetts Legislature. **Whether a region uses the application process provided by the program or not, every participant MUST have an application on file.** The free, online, application for participant completion will be provided in March or at the completion of the new system - whichever comes first. Additionally, all participant data should be reported to Commonwealth Corporation within the CC YouthWorks Hub.

**Note:** This database is used to support YouthWorks program management and reporting to the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Legislature. Grantees must record ONLY information about youth and young adults who are participating in YouthWorks programs. Information about participants in other (non-YouthWorks) programs should NOT be included in the database.

All final record data for the year must be submitted prior to **July 15, 2026**. The final invoice for the year will not be paid prior to the completion and submission of the final report.

In addition to data entry, grantees are required to complete multiple, short narrative reports each quarter. The format for these narrative reports will be provided to grantees.

## Reporting Periods

Period	Start Date	End Date	Report Opens On	Report Closes On
#1	Contract Begin Date	Tues 07/15/25	Wed 07/16/25	Fri 08/01/25
#2	Wed 07/16/25	Sun 08/31/25	Mon 09/01/25	Mon 09/15/25
#3	Mon 09/01/25	Wed 12/31/25	Thu 01/01/26	Thu 01/15/26
#4	Thu 01/01/26	Thu 04/30/26	Fri 05/01/26	Fri 05/15/26
#5	Fri 05/01/26	Tue 06/30/26	Wed 07/01/26	Wed 07/15/26

Other, important, program related dates can be found in the YouthWorks Portal here:

[Commonwealth Corporation - Calendar \(commcorp.org\)](http://Commonwealth Corporation - Calendar (commcorp.org))

### D4. YouthWorks Confidentiality Statement and Release Form

Program operators must have all YouthWorks participants complete the Confidentiality Statement and Release Form which can be found in the YouthWorks Help Center Portal. This is to ensure that participants have signed off on the release of participant record data including social security numbers. Grantees must maintain the signed copies of these documents in accordance with record retention policies.

### D5. Fiscal Status Reports/Invoices

Grantees may request reimbursement under an executed contract by submitting a Commonwealth Corporation Fiscal Status Report (FSR). An FSR form will be issued to the grantee's fiscal agent electronically. Invoices will be accepted monthly; special requests for more frequent submissions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For a tentative payment schedule, please refer to the Addenda. The goal, assuming a correct FSR submission, is for Commonwealth Corporation to send payment within thirty (30) days. The best way for Commonwealth Corporation to guarantee and confirm on time payment is if we are able to pay organizations via electronic funds transfer (EFT). If you would like to take advantage of this, please notify your Program Contact for assistance. Grantees must submit an FSR, at least, monthly in accordance with the deadlines in the table below:

Expenses Associated with the following period	Invoice Due Date
May 1 - May 31, 2025	Not later than June 15, 2025
June 1 - June 30, 2025	Not later than July 15, 2025
July 1 - July 31, 2025	Not later than August 15, 2025
August 1 - August 31, 2025	Not later than September 15, 2025
September 1 - September 30, 2025	No later than October 15, 2025

October 1 - October 31, 2025	No later than November 15, 2025
November 1 - November 30, 2025	No later than December 15, 2025
December 1 - December 31, 2025	No later than January 15, 2026
January 1 - January 31, 2026	No later than February 15, 2026
February 1 - February 28, 2026	No later than March 15, 2026
March 1 - March 31, 2026	No later than April 15, 2026
April 1 - April 30, 2026	No later than May 15, 2026
May 1 - May 31, 2026	No later than June 15, 2026
June 1 - June 30, 2026	No later than July 15, 2026 <sup>4</sup>

The grantee is responsible for maintaining full backup documentation in alignment with all expenses for monitoring purposes and should be able to provide it to CommCorp staff when requested within 24 to 48 hours for the request. Additional details for monitoring and backup documentation submission requirements are covered in the grantee guide.

Program staff for each grantee should work closely with their fiscal office to ensure accurate program reporting is reflected in each FSR. FSR access can/will be granted by Commonwealth Corporation's Operations team. Access requests should be submitted via email to [youthworks@commcorp.org](mailto:youthworks@commcorp.org).

**Fiscal Monitoring:**

Each grant cycle Commonwealth Corporation will conduct Fiscal Monitoring on a select group of grantees. This is to ensure that organizations receiving grants from Commonwealth Corporation:

1. Have the fiscal systems, including operating internal controls, needed to meet select federal, state, and other (e.g. foundation) requirements, as applicable.
2. Meet the terms of the grant award outlined in the contract with Commonwealth Corporation; and
3. Expend grant funds only for allowable activities.

All grantees will be required to complete an initial risk assessment survey and submit backup documentation for the first, second, and final FSR entries as well as one additional FSR entry as identified by the CommCorp team. Failure to comply with these Fiscal requirements could impact your candidacy for more intensive Fiscal Monitoring activities. If your grant is selected for more intensive Fiscal Monitoring, more information about the process will be provided.

**D6. Narrative Final Report**

Grantees must submit a **final report by July 15, 2026**.

**D7. Expectations for Grant Administration for 2025-26**

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<sup>4</sup> All final modifications must be submitted prior to the final invoice. Grantees must submit a final invoice for the program year

For the application, the lead entity will need to provide the following contacts:

- Authorized Signatory - This is the individual who is authorized to sign the contract and related invoices. (NOTE: If your organization has other people that need to be involved or aware of the contracting process, please notify your Program contact so there are no delays in the contracting process.)
- Fiscal Contact - This is the lead contact for financial matters, including questions about invoices, budgetary items, and Fiscal Status Report updates. (NOTE: If you have more than one person entering Fiscal Status Report data, please let your Program contact know who those contacts are and who is authorized to sign the invoice so as to not delay payment.)
- Project Coordinator - This is the person overseeing the relationship or any project on behalf of the lead entity and is typically the primary or main point of contact. This person will be copied on all communications and will be directly contacted for any programmatic or project-related questions.

Additionally, the lead entity will be required to provide the following information and/or comply with the following requirements:

- submission of a current (signed within the past 12 months) W-9 that reflects the entity as part of the grant application;
- monthly submission of fiscal status reports during programming, even if there are no expenses accrued on a specific month;
- backup documentation as outlined in the grantee guide;
- regular data entry as outlined above during active performance periods;
- complete and accurate reporting of participants (Note: All YouthWorks participants must report social security numbers for evaluation purposes. Additionally, all participants must have a minimum of 10 program hours (any combination of work hours and Signal Success workshops.);
- engage and maintain new partnerships of various career fields,
- engage participants in Commonwealth Corporation programming;
- recruit and make best efforts to retain participants;
- attend virtual, statewide, regional, and local meetings;
- support the organization of regional site visits by Commonwealth Corporation with regional leads in attendance during worksite visits;
- complete timely modification requests (no later than May 15, 2026);
- complete timely contract closeout activities, including submission of final invoices and reports;
- complete reporting of local program leverage - including identifying if a YouthWorks participant is co-enrolled in certain other programs, including WIOA Title I youth, Connecting Activities, and others;
- Appropriate retention of program and participant information for seven (7) years; and

- Timely engagement with CommCorp staff members and auditors in the event of a program audit.

**Note:** Final invoices will not be paid prior to the completion and submission of the region's final report.

We recognize that compliance with these administrative steps may require grantees to work more intensively with local program sub-grantees. We encourage grantees to have early discussions with sub-grantees to review program expectations and protocols while engaging in greater communication and stronger oversight from the beginning of the application period so that grantees and their subcontractors can respond with administrative improvements.

**E. APPLICATION AND PROGRAM PLAN SUMMARY:**

2025-2026 Application and Program Plan Summary

For each question, please provide details of programming as it relates to each cycle. If information varies from one cycle to the next, please indicate that in your response. If an additional table is needed to distinguish cycles, please copy and paste an additional table for use and label it to indicate the programming cycle.

1. **Recruitment:** Should include a defined recruitment process for participants.
  - a. Provide details about the overall recruitment efforts of the region.

CYCLE 1	Tier	Recruitment strategy of participants	Will you recruit new partners to specifically place/support participants in this Tier?	Placement strategy	Projected number of enrollments in age group	Number of Peer Leaders
	Tier 1					
	Tier 2					
	Tier 3					
	Tier 4					
CYCLE 2						
	Tier 1					
	Tier 2					
	Tier 3					
	Tier 4					

**Note:** Programs are encouraged to maintain a 1 to 12 ratio – one Peer Leader for every 12 participants.

- b. How will **eligibility determination be conducted**? If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer this question for each organization/program.
2. **Program Overview:** Should include / describe a model of strategic pairing of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 for the purposes of a sustained and progressively sequenced set of work and learning experiences, with an assessment plan to evaluate learning and skill gain aligned with programmatic goals.

CYCLE 1			
Name of Program	Name of Organization Operating the Program	Brief Description of Model	Goal of Programming

CYCLE 2			
Name of Program	Name of Organization Operating the Program	Brief Description of Model	Goal of Programming

3. **Program Design:** Should include a strategic blending of work-related experiences and an outline of career exploration activities that rationalizes prioritization. **Note:** Dates indicated in the chart below will tell readers if the programming takes place in Cycle 1 or Cycle 2.
- a. Provide a description of the approach and format of the career pathway component.
    - i. Provide a description of any additional career exploration activities (job shadowing, career panels, informational interviews, career mentoring, industry events, etc.).
    - ii. What industries and careers will be the focus?
    - iii. What credentials, if any, will be offered to participants?

	Planned Credentials/ Certificates Offered	Service-Learning Project	Subsidized work placement	Sector-aligned, Project Based Learning (See page 20)	Micro Career Pathway Courses
Tier 1					
Tier 2					
Tier 3					
Tier 4					

- iv. Provide a brief description of *Signal Success* delivery. Will the delivery of workshops consist of weekly workshops, bi-weekly workshops, or week-long workshops? Who will deliver the workshops?

**The Service and Project-Based Learning Tier (Tier 1):** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer these questions in a concentrated matter that covers the scope of the region.*

1. (If applicable) Please discuss how these placements will be different from subsidized placements for older youth. How were employers identified for this tier of services? What is the range of industries and careers that participants will learn about?
2. Provide details about the orientation participants will receive.

3. (If applicable) Provide details about any service-learning models that your program intends to offer. Please discuss how the program will be structured and include information about the project or projects that youth will complete. What skills will the participants learn? How will the program be structured to include assessment and growth? How will the project connect with specific careers?
4. In what ways will this program foster stronger career awareness and career exploration?
5. If any, which project-based learning offerings will be included for this tier? See page 20.

**The Early and Career Trajectory Experience Tier (Tier 2):** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer these questions in a concentrated matter that covers the scope of the region.*

1. Provide details about the orientation participants will receive.
2. Do you provide returning participants with progressively challenging placements? If so, please describe your approach.
3. How does your programming provide mentorship opportunities for working professionals?
4. If any, which project-based learning offerings will be included for this tier? See page 17.
5. Will micro career pathway courses be included for this tier?

**The Career Pathway Training and Support Tier (Tier 3):** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer these questions in a concentrated matter that covers the scope of the region.*

1. What additional program components will you align with these offerings to develop a more comprehensive career pathway approach?

**The Career Pathway Credentialing and Certifications Tier (Tier 4):** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer these questions in a concentrated matter that covers the scope of the region.*

1. What are the start and end dates of this cohort?
2. What additional program components will you align with these offerings to develop a more comprehensive career pathway approach?
3. What career pathway(s) will be offered?
4. How will career specific mentorship be provided?
5. Which, if any, of the partnering organizations/businesses are looking to hire participants at the completion of the program?
6. How will you support participants in the identification of a part-time or full-time position or educational opportunity at the completion of the program?
7. Detail how case management will be similar and distinct from the case management approach used in other tiers of the program.

4. **Case Management:** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer these questions for each organization/program.*

- a. Case management should support participants in attaining work experience, credentials and/or certifications that enhance their marketability while outlining wrap-around services available for participants. Detail your case management approach and be sure to indicate what tools and strategies you will use to connect with participants remotely as well as which services will be in-person for all tiers indicating the difference of depth in support.
- b. Detail the **support services** that you plan to provide to participants.

5. **Employer and Partnership Outreach:** *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer this question for each organization/program. Please emphasize employers and sites that are focused on climate, clean energy, or resiliency jobs.*

- a. Employer and partnership outreach should take participant recruitment into consideration and include worksites that align with participant fit, interests, skills, and workforce data in the region.
- b. If applicable, provide a list of employers who will serve as a worksite and/or service-learning experience site.

Employer	Region	Industry	Sector

*Industry should indicate types such as communication, technology, communications, etc. Sector should indicate non-profit, for-profit, or private sector.*

6. **Budget and Budget Narrative:** Complete the project budget template spreadsheet.

- a. On the Grantee Narrative Budget worksheet, provide line-item budget and budget narrative detail for your organization for Cycle 1 (April 26 (start of contracting) - August 30, 2025) and Cycle 2 (September 2, 2025 - June 30, 2026).
- b. On separate Budget Narrative Partner worksheets (one for each of your partner organizations), provide line-item budget and budget narrative detail for each partner organization for Cycle 1 (May 15, 2025 (start of contracting) - August 30, 2025) and Cycle 2 (September 2, 2025 - June 30, 2026) periods. These worksheets are linked to and will populate the Regional Rollup worksheet.

**NOTE: Please use the budget template to indicate your projected spending.**

Commonwealth Corporation will work with all regions to review program plans and budgets to support the expanding of capacity.

**NOTE:** Please do not include Unemployment Insurance in the line item on the YouthWorks budget form called “Fringe for youth work experience.” In addition, please indicate in the YouthWorks budget narrative what your youth fringe rate of 14% includes (e.g., FICA, Workers Compensation, tax withholding, etc.).

7. **Program Operations and Administration**

- a. Describe your process for **program monitoring** including workshop and worksite reviews, and fiscal monitoring of operators and subcontractors.
- b. Describe basic **payroll procedures**.
- c. Describe your process for **calculating the income of a household** for a participant. Is

it income based on gross or net income? Would this be different across partnerships?

- d. Describe procedures and protocols in place for **ensuring data security and confidentiality** (hard copy files and electronic storage).
- e. How will the **flow of information be managed** and documented such that youth eligibility will be determined in advance of the projected start date for participation? *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer this question for each organization/program.*

**7a. Staffing Plan** - Complete the chart below. Include the information for your fiscal personnel. *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please include staffing plan information for each organization/program.*

Staff Name and Title (for staff not yet hired, please provide title)	Name of Organization	Main responsibilities for this grant (If providing participant support, include Tier)	Anticipated date of hire	Onboarding support needed by Commonwealth Corporation

## **F. PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

### ***A. Proposal Evaluation Process:***

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be reviewed by Commonwealth Corporation. Representatives of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and other state agency partners may participate in this process.

**The review process will consist of the following steps:**

#### **Step 1: Threshold Criteria Screening**

Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements and timeliness of response. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late may not be considered.

#### **Step 2: Review Committee and Application Feedback**

A review committee will review and provide feedback on all eligible submissions. Review and detailed feedback will be documented. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee has a complete understanding of the proposed program and applicant qualifications.

Submitted proposals will be reviewed and feedback provided based on the following criteria:

#### **Feedback Categories**

- 1. Recruitment Plan:** clearly outlines and indicates how programs intend to recruit in-school and out-of-school participants, including how eligibility will be determined.
- 2. Program Overview:** clearly describes a model of progress work and learning experiences with an assessment plan to evaluate learning and skill gain aligned with programmatic goals.
- 3. Program Design:** addresses the required program design elements while clearly defining career pathway components and how those pathways correlate with the current labor market data of the region, certificates and/or credentials offered, and career exploration activities.
- 4. Case Management:** clearly describes the holistic support, tools, and strategies that will be used to encourage retention of participants, especially those with greater challenges and barriers, within the program. Response should outline how participants will gain access to wrap-around services.
- 5. Employer and Partnership Outreach:** clearly describes the strategy for employer outreach and engagement while describing the process for identifying and training worksite supervisors. Response should show strong evidence of employer engagement in partnership and program design, including a worksite placement strategy that is likely to result in placement/advancement and retention for program participants.

**6. Budget and Budget Narrative:** uses the template provided. Budget should include the salary for the full-time position, previously approved; participants stipends and wages within the provided wage range per tier; and details of training and equipment purchases.

**7. Program Operations and Staffing Plan:** describes the process for program monitoring, payroll procedures, data security, and collection of data in addition to the details of program staff members.

Applicants whose proposals meet the funding criteria and priorities will be prioritized for funding. Applications who do not meet the standard for funding will be provided written feedback and may request a follow-up session to discuss resubmitting their application.

**Please note:** Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consider the applicant's past performance in operating grants administered by Commonwealth Corporation and factor this performance into funding decisions.

### Step 3: Notification of Grant Award Status

All applicants will be notified of their award status by email via a feedback letter.

- A. ***Audited Financial Statements and Verification of Fiscal Management Capacity:*** All applicants that are selected for an award may be required to submit a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statement prior to the execution of a final contract. In addition, prior to the grant award, Commonwealth Corporation staff may review an organization's fiscal systems and internal controls to verify that the organization has the capacity to manage public grant funds and administer the program. Please note that Commonwealth Corporation and all award recipients of the SLFRF must follow the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#) (2 CFR Part 200) and the Terms and Conditions of the SLFRF assistance. Your organization should review the Uniform Guidance requirements applicable to your organization's use of SLFRF funds, and SLFRF-funded projects. Recipients should consider how and whether certain aspects of the Uniform Guidance apply. This procurement will comply with applicable laws governing the use of these funds. Additional guidance may be provided upon contracting.
- B. **Additional Evaluation Notes:** In addition to the scoring system outlined, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to only consider submissions that, in our sole judgment, are complete and responsive to the solicitation's requirements and include all required application components. Additionally, Commonwealth Corporation and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reserve the right to consider other criteria in making competitive awards among comparably qualified applicants. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to accept any and all applications, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the interest of the Commonwealth Corporation or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do so. This RFP does not commit Commonwealth Corporation to award any contracts. Upon submission, all applications become the property of Commonwealth Corporation. Commonwealth Corporation is not responsible for electronic submissions that are not received by Commonwealth Corporation. We reserve the right to use sources of funding other than the YouthWorks FY'24-FY'25 Appropriations and ARPA to support proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are possible. The Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to extend grant award amounts in accordance with funding source allowances.

- C. Appeals: After receiving an official feedback letter, appeals of the funding decision may be filed with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) of Commonwealth Corporation, 33 Harrison Ave, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02111. Appeals must be filed within fifteen (15) days of the date of Commonwealth Corporation's notice to unsuccessful bidders. The ELT may decide to hold an informal review of the decision, and may decide to grant an appeal, deny an appeal, or modify an award based on information provided during the informal review.
- D. Project Terms and Conditions: Grantees will be required to abide by the Commonwealth Corporation's Standard Contract Terms and Conditions, which will be provided during contract negotiation. Applicants may review these terms and conditions prior to applying by contacting Aadil Sulaiman [asulaiman@commcorp.org](mailto:asulaiman@commcorp.org) to request a copy. In addition, all final contracts are subject to negotiation of a final statement of work.

#### **G. SUMMARY OF ATTACHMENTS**

The following attachments must be completed and submitted by all lead applicants:

· Uploads:

- A. Application and Program Plan Summary. See pages 39-43 of the RFP.
- B. Program Budget and Narrative. (See attached.)
- C. Organization's W9 (for the contracting organization, updated within the past 12 months)
- D. Employee Handbook (if updated since last submission)
- E. Fiscal Policy and Procedures Guide (if updated since last submission)
- F. Organizational Chart (if updated since last submission)

## Attachment 1

### 2024 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous United States

Family Size	Annual Income		Monthly Income	
	Poverty Level	200% Poverty Level	Poverty Level	200% Poverty Level
1	\$15,060.00	\$30,120.00	\$1,255.00	\$2,510.00
2	\$20,440.00	\$40,880.00	\$1,703.33	\$3,406.67
3	\$25,820.00	\$51,640.00	\$2,151.67	\$4,303.33
4	\$31,200.00	\$62,400.00	\$2,600.00	\$5,200.00
5	\$36,580.00	\$73,160.00	\$3,048.33	\$6,096.67
6	\$41,960.00	\$83,920.00	\$3,496.67	\$6,993.33
7	\$47,340.00	\$94,680.00	\$3,945.00	\$7,890.00
8	\$52,720.00	\$105,440.00	\$4,393.33	\$8,786.67
Each additional family member:	\$5,380.00	\$10,760.00	\$448.33	\$896.67

**Note:** Poverty guidelines are updated periodically in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2). The guidelines for 2024 went into effect as of January 11, 2024. The Federal Register notice was published January 17, 2024 and can be viewed at: [Federal Register :: Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines](#)

## Attachment 2 YouthWorks Guidance on Stipends and Incentives

A **stipend** payment is given to people who are participating in an internship, project-based learning opportunity, apprenticeship, or a fellowship, and represents a payment to help the recipient defray living expenses. **A stipend is typically not based on the number of hours worked in a week, but rather on a prearranged set of factors regarding the type and amount of work that is expected to be completed in a period.** It represents a payment that enables somebody to be exempt from waged or salaried employment to undertake a role that is normally unpaid.

- ✓ Program staff are responsible for documenting the project assignments and successful completion of project/ learning program components.
- ✓ Program staff may assign youth to classes, learning sessions and/ or workshops for completion for a stipend to be awarded.
- ✓ If the participants are not employees, the program will **not** be responsible for social security taxes, nor any payroll withholdings.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ Often programs will not use payroll to manage this system as there is no tax responsibility.
- ✓ The program WILL issue a 1099 MISC to the student/ young person at year-end tracking payments made. A 1099 MISC should be issued for any stipend above \$600 annually.
- ✓ Students and sites are encouraged to seek tax advice regarding the 1099 MISC and student income tax, specifically the student's eligibility for the earned income tax credit.
- ✓ When programs offer a stipend as part of learning program, the student/ young person is not an employee and therefore will not be eligible for worker's compensation insurance coverage; instead, programs should be sure to have a clear student/intern accident policy.<sup>6</sup>

**Incentives** are often used by youth programs to encourage certain behavior by program participants – a \$50 gift card in exchange for good attendance; a ticket to an amusement park to recognize program completion; \$100 gift card for completing a diploma or job certification.

- ✓ Incentives are not wages, since they do not represent the value transferred in exchange for services performed within an employer-employee relationship.
- ✓ Use of incentives should be tracked by the youth-serving program with documentation on the type of incentive, amount of incentive, and program recipient name
- ✓ If the amount of the gift cards alone or the gift cards combined with the stipends exceeds \$600 annually, the value of the gift cards also need to be documented in the 1099 MISC

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<sup>5</sup> The SS-8 form from the IRS allows organizations or workers a formal process for establishing payments that are not subject to employment taxes and income tax withholding. To access the form: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss8.pdf> and to view a completed sample: <https://tinyurl.com/y2o7mcyc>

<sup>6</sup> All YouthWorks participants who have actual placements (in-person and virtual) must receive a wage, have a work permit (if under 18), and be covered by the employer of record's worker's compensation policy. Also, programs may not ask youth or their parents to waive their rights to worker's compensation benefits.

**TENTATIVE FY25-26 PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

This schedule will be included in both the Grantee Guide and the Fiscal Status Report. This schedule is subject to change.

Grant Start Date	Thursday, May 15, 2025	Grant End Date	Tuesday, June 30, 2026
FSR Entry Deadline	CC Check Mail Date	CC EFT Delivery Date	Column1
Friday, May 30, 2025	Thursday, June 12, 2025	Tuesday, June 17, 2025	
Friday, June 13, 2025	Thursday, June 26, 2025	Tuesday, July 1, 2025	Start Cycle 1 Weekly Check Runs
Friday, June 20, 2025	Thursday, July 3, 2025	Tuesday, July 8, 2025	
Friday, June 27, 2025	Thursday, July 10, 2025	Tuesday, July 15, 2025	
Friday, July 4, 2025	Thursday, July 17, 2025	Tuesday, July 22, 2025	
Friday, July 11, 2025	Thursday, July 24, 2025	Tuesday, July 29, 2025	
Friday, July 18, 2025	Thursday, July 31, 2025	Tuesday, August 5, 2025	
Friday, July 25, 2025	Thursday, August 7, 2025	Tuesday, August 12, 2025	
Friday, August 1, 2025	Thursday, August 14, 2025	Tuesday, August 19, 2025	
Friday, August 8, 2025	Thursday, August 21, 2025	Tuesday, August 26, 2025	
Friday, August 15, 2025	Thursday, August 28, 2025	Tuesday, September 2, 2025	
Friday, August 22, 2025	Thursday, September 4, 2025	Tuesday, September 9, 2025	
Friday, August 29, 2025	Thursday, September 11, 2025	Tuesday, September 16, 2025	Final Cycle 1 Weekly Check Runs
Friday, September 5, 2025	Thursday, September 18, 2025	Tuesday, September 23, 2025	
Friday, September 19, 2025	Thursday, October 2, 2025	Tuesday, October 7, 2025	
Friday, October 3, 2025	Thursday, October 16, 2025	Tuesday, October 21, 2025	
Friday, October 17, 2025	Thursday, October 30, 2025	Tuesday, November 4, 2025	
Friday, October 31, 2025	Thursday, November 13, 2025	Tuesday, November 18, 2025	
Friday, November 14, 2025	Wednesday, November 26, 2025	Tuesday, December 2, 2025	HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
Friday, November 28, 2025	Thursday, December 11, 2025	Tuesday, December 16, 2025	
Friday, December 12, 2025	Wednesday, December 24, 2025	Tuesday, December 30, 2025	HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
Friday, December 26, 2025	Thursday, January 8, 2026	Tuesday, January 13, 2026	

Friday, January 9, 2026	Thursday, January 22, 2026	Tuesday, January 27, 2026	
Friday, January 23, 2026	Thursday, February 5, 2026	Tuesday, February 10, 2026	
Friday, February 6, 2026	Thursday, February 19, 2026	Tuesday, February 24, 2026	
Friday, February 20, 2026	Thursday, March 5, 2026	Tuesday, March 10, 2026	
Friday, March 6, 2026	Thursday, March 19, 2026	Tuesday, March 24, 2026	
Friday, March 20, 2026	Thursday, April 2, 2026	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	
Friday, April 3, 2026	Thursday, April 16, 2026	Tuesday, April 21, 2026	
Friday, April 17, 2026	Thursday, April 30, 2026	Tuesday, May 5, 2026	
Friday, May 1, 2026	Thursday, May 14, 2026	Tuesday, May 19, 2026	
Friday, May 15, 2026	Thursday, May 28, 2026	Tuesday, June 2, 2026	
Friday, May 29, 2026	Thursday, June 11, 2026	Tuesday, June 16, 2026	
Friday, June 12, 2026	Thursday, June 25, 2026	Tuesday, June 30, 2026	
Friday, June 26, 2026	Thursday, July 9, 2026	Tuesday, July 14, 2026	
Friday, July 10, 2026	Thursday, July 23, 2026	Tuesday, July 28, 2026	
Friday, July 24, 2026	Thursday, August 6, 2026	Tuesday, August 11, 2026	



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